The voluntary action of free subjectivity, that is, the concrete form in which the historically determined social being realizes its necessity

Juan Iñigo Carrera
CICP

In his text "To do or what to do: That is the question. From theory to political action", Mercedes D'Alessandro and Igal Kejsefman (hereinafter MDA and IK), affirm that from my book "Capital: historical reason, revolutionary subject and consciousness" it can be deduced:

> Another way of understanding material conditions is determinism or economism, which is what we are intense to address and discuss in this work because we understand that it leads to political (in)action. This position can be found in the book Capital: Historical Reason, Revolutionary Subject, and Consciousness, by Juan Iñigo Carrera (JIC). (MDA and IK, p. 3)

In my book *Capital: Historical Reason, Revolutionary Subject, and Consciousness,* I repeatedly develop the necessity (i.e., determination) of the political action of the working class as the concrete form of overcoming the capitalist mode of production. But I do not dwell on this necessity, but rather advance by developing the reason why this political action needs to take a specific concrete form, which in the face of the postmodern discourse of the repudiation of the seizure of state power by the working class, vindicates the proposal of the *Communist Manifesto*. I summarize the question here by stringing together the following quotes:

> It is therefore in this revolutionary political action that the working class embodies the fullness of the development of the material productive forces of society in which the necessity of the capitalist mode of production to surpass itself is directly expressed: it is here that the immediate development of the general conscious organization of social life is settled. (JIC, Imago Mundi, pp. 45-46)

> The centralization of capital as directly social property, i.e., as the property of the state, is the most powerful form of the socialization of private labor. By means of this centralization, the working class takes into its own alienated social relation. Therefore, its realization is the general concrete form of political action in which the working class expresses its historical interests as a revolutionary subject. (JIC, p. 51)

> These conditions in which the essence of present-day capital accumulation develops take on a specific ideological form in the pseudo-critique of the capitalist mode of production that is fascinated by the appearance of the opposition of a "civil society" to the state. Thus, the antagonistic historical roles of the working class and the capitalist class, determined by the transformation into the very materiality of human labour governed by the real subsumption of labour in capital, are erased from the political struggle. Its place is taken by the appearance that, on the one hand, the autonomous affirmation of the human spirit free from its historical determination as the personification of social capital is moving, and, on the other, the state is moving, not as a necessary political representative of social capital but as an autonomous subject that serves capital from its exterior. This inversion has a finished political expression: the proclaiming as the quintessence of revolutionary action overcoming the capitalist mode of production the abomination and horror of the political action of the working class aimed at seizing state power. In this way, the forms of political action in which the circumstantial impotence of the working class is reflected to exercise the general political representation of the social capital that it valorizes with its surplus labor, and therefore, its circumstantial impotence to advance by taking directly into its hands its own alienated general social relation, are ideologically inverted as if they were a leap forward in the process of overcoming alienation. Quite appropriately, this political impotence completes its ideological role by lowering the specific power of scientific consciousness as a necessary concrete form of the political action of the proletariat to the level of "desire" and "celebration," so much in the postmodern style. (JIC, pp. 120-123)

> The concrete forms of internationalist action directed towards the formation of an

> immediately world working class is the central question underlying any political action capable of expressing "the general interests of the proletariat". Under a new specific form, the closure of the *Communist Manifesto* continues to be in full force. (JIC, p. 91)

How is it possible to see in this concrete proposal for the political action of the working class a call to political (in)action? Perhaps one could think of a reading incapable of facing the complexity of the issue. Or, even worse, in which statements are made about a text that has not been read in its entirety (something that seems to be a habit in some Argentine Marxists). But no. Both authors know my developments in their entirety, not only through the presumed reading of my book, but they have participated in exhibitions where I have raised and subjected to intense discussions the unity of my points of view about the necessity for the political action of the working class as a revolutionary subject and the form of consciousness capable of organizing it.

The question to which the work of MDA and IK really gives rise is then the following: What necessity is the consciousness of its authors that determines them to present my proposal for revolutionary political action of the working class as if it were the negation of political action?

Perhaps there will be no shortage of people here who raise an indignant determinism! But if the action of MDA and IK lacked necessity, determination, any attempt to submit it to discussion would be meaningless. If, just as they come to their conclusion about my work, they could have reached the opposite conclusion just for the sake of it, or to conclude that my developments are blue, or to any other conclusion devoid of meaning (i.e., of necessity, of determination), then any attempt at reasoning (that is, any search for reason, that is, for determination) with respect to their proposals would be devoid of purpose and, therefore, of reason for existing. The fear of determination and its knowledge is nothing other than the cult of irrational action, of blind action with respect to its own necessity.

A clarification before moving forward, in order to avoid any misunderstanding. In the text that follows, I directly address MDA and IK, since they are the ones who have opened this debate and have personally invited me to answer them. But my answer is not aimed at their persons but at their condition as representatives of ideological conceptions whose determinations transcend them personally and which today have a dominant presence in the organization of the political action of the working class.

From the outset, MDA and IK propose its scientific character as rationality, that is, as a determination of its discourse. In particular, they begin with the relationship between knowledge and transformative action. But, instead of explaining the concrete relationship between the two, they cannot go beyond thinking about the statement that knowledge "serves as a basis", "potential", has a "direct effect" on action:

> If we understand that transformative action on the world is enhanced by our knowledge of it, and this knowledge is embodied in scientific theory, then it is central to understand the link between how this knowledge is embodied in action and how action transforms it. That is, since we understand that the creation of scientific knowledge is a form of political action, it serves as a basis for it, power, etc., then the question is about what is the link between theory and action, or how do we resolve the separation of these two moments into a unity. (MDA and IK, p. 2)
>
> …
>
> The readings that are made of the material conditions will have a direct effect on the different tactics and political strategies -alternatives of action- for the transformation in the face of the same problem (the exploitation of man by man), which shows the relevance of this problem that is apparently theoretical. (MDA and IK, p. 2)

Now, although MDA and IK cannot finish explaining the concrete relationship, it is clear that in their exposition this relationship is presented with the character of a determination: knowledge, that is, consciousness, determines action. But what determines knowledge, what determines consciousness? Where does the necessity for one theory or another to be formulated,

for one "reading" or another to be carried out, come from? According to MDA and IK, this necessity cannot arise from the social being of the subject, that is, from the way in which he carries in his person his capacity to participate in the organization of the material process of social metabolism. This would be a dreadful "determinism or economism". Consequently, MDA and IK will attribute it to a political will that defines for itself, that is, free of all determination other than its own "political objectives", what form to give to its consciousness and, from there, to its action:

> From our point of view, all scientific theories act on the world and are not neutral at all. The difference lies in their political objectives... (MDA and IK, p. 1)

On this basis, MDA and IK express their interest in "contributing to the construction" of "systems" that share the same political objective since they "openly assume their unity of theory and action [...] understanding the need for a conscious transformation of the world". And then they explain the existence of very different and opposing proposals for political action within the field thus defined by the differences in "the reading" ("reformist" in some cases, "revolutionary" in others) of the "material conditions" made by their respective authors. However, it does not even occur to MDA and IK to ask the question that their own exposition makes obvious: and on what do the differences in these "readings" depend? Or to use the term abominable, what determines those differences? We already know that, according to MDA and IK, to explain the existence of these different readings because their authors are the subjects of the actions in which the organization of the material conditions of their process of social life takes a necessary concrete form and, therefore, that these actions are the concrete form with which they exercise their general social relation, it is to fall into an inadmissible "economism" and "fatalism". And then? Could it be that nature produces individuals with the will to consciously transform the world but endows some of them with a revolutionary spirit and others with a reformist one? Or is it rather that MDA and IK are bearers of the social necessity to exercise a fatally conformist will with respect to the most immediate appearances of political action?

But there is more. According to MDA and IK:

> When Lenin warns us that "without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement" he does nothing more than bring to the fore the unity between theory and practice, between subject and object. (MDA and IK, p. 2)

Suppose, in the terms of MDA and IK, that under the pernicious influence of an economic "fatalism" no one had the will to develop a "revolutionary theory." In such a case, always in the terms of MDA and IK, there could be no "revolutionary movement." Does this mean that the capitalist mode of production has the possibility of being eternal? Or, once the revolutionary will is placed on its feet, is it not that as a historically specific form of organizing human life, and therefore of the development of the material productive forces of social labor, the capitalist mode of production carries within itself the necessity for its own overcoming by generating a concrete subject bearer of this necessity and, therefore, of a revolutionary will?

Well, maybe MDA and IK will just tell us not to take Lenin so seriously, that he is just a "metaphor." Because after so much certainty, they begin to hesitate and appeal to a dubious "maybe":

> If the action of the oppressed is a non-action in the expectation of the hour that will come for the development of capital itself, instead of fostering the prompt organization of those from below, they may never come to know a new society. (MDA and IK, p. 4)

How? Maybe action is needed, maybe it isn't necessary anyway? Any scientific rigor leaves the stage here to the rhythm of a bolero: "quizás, quizás, quizás". It happens that, after so much enthusiasm for free political will as a determinant of action, MDA and IK are frightened by their own words, and it turns out that:

> Of course, the danger lies in falling into the opposite pole: voluntarism, or the domination of subjective conditions over objective ones. To believe that by one's own will, and by having known one's condition as exploited, knowing oneself to be a commodity (the contemporary being of oneself, as Hegel would propose) the conditions for the transformation of the order of things are already given. Of course, that would also be a quixotic thing. (MDA and IK, pp. 4-5)

But how do MDA and IK know that they have not succumbed to the "danger" of falling into voluntarism from the very beginning of their proposal, where political wills, starting with their own, prevail without the slightest reference to their determination? There is no answer in his text. They leave us with the theoretical daisy of "I fall a lot, a little, nothing in voluntarism, I fall..." In my work "On the Character of the Economic Base Relationship - Political and Legal Superstructure: The Opposition Between Logical Representation and Dialectical Reproduction" I have highlighted the character of this type of criterion, which aims to derive the norm from its deviations instead of explaining deviations as a necessary way of realizing the norm, with regard to its proposal by Gramsci:

> Another clear example in the same sense is offered by Gramsci: he warns that one must not fall into "economism", nor fall into "ideology", but he can only say about determination itself that "it is difficult to establish with exactness". How do you know that you are falling to one side or the other if you cannot define what it is to be at the point of equilibrium, that is, at the point where falling to one side and the other have eliminated each other and therefore their relationship no longer explains anything? All the complexity of the real relationship ends up reduced to a quantitative ambiguity. This is not surprising, since logic is the necessary way to ideally represent the quantitative determination considered in itself. It is because in reality representation only corresponds to a determination of quantity, that none of the supporters of "relative autonomy" and similar conceptions can enunciate the quality of determination, and they cannot go beyond explaining it as a matter of quantitative deviations devoid of norm. (JIC, "On Character...", pp. 2-3)

This text of mine, presented just one year before that of MDA and IK at the same epistemology congress, points directly to the methodological basis that sustains the true ideological content of MDA and IK's proposal. Indeed, MDA and IK are convinced that scientific knowledge has, by nature and therefore ahistorically, the form of a logical representation:

> Scientific theory appears to us as the way in which we represent reality through thought, but this is not a mere representation, since as we have pointed out, science is action, therefore this representation that we make is also the reproduction of what we represent and therefore collaborates in the construction of our world. (MDA and IK, p. 6)

Science, however, and a fortiori scientific theory, is nothing but a form of consciousness, hence the expression of a historically determined social relation, and hence a historically determined concrete form of social relation itself. And like any social relation, its historical character is not merely limited to giving it one or another content but determines the change of its very form. The real question of the historical determination of scientific consciousness is not simply the fact that an ahistorically given method engenders different contents, but necessarily starts from the question of the historical determination of the scientific method itself.

The critical will of MDA and IK stops at the appearance that the content of science has a historical character, but that its form, that is, its method, is ahistorically determined as that of a representation of the concrete through thought. They severely condemn those who do not critically recognize that science has its content determined by the historical character of the social process. But they cannot even realize that they do exactly the same thing in the form of science, in its method. A dose of his own criticism could well be applied to them:

> ... This way of understanding the thing only reveals to us the uncommitted, or naïve

> character at best, of the scientist who is not only necessarily conditioned by the mercantile character of scientific production [...] Their way of presenting themselves [...] is only a way of naturalizing and uncritically reproducing the social relations in force under the protection of a discourse that *presents itself as* scientific. (MDA and IK, p. 1)

But, once again, what matters are the questions left open by the proposal of MDA and IK. Should we be content to attribute his uncritical acceptance of theoretical representation as the natural method of science to the "uncommitted, or naïve at best" character of his scientific will? Or should we ask ourselves about the concrete historical necessity that takes shape in his scientific will "to naturalize and uncritically reproduce the social relations in force under the protection of a discourse that presents itself as scientific"? MDA and IK must give their response; mine is, without a doubt, the second.

In this sense, there is a fact that is remarkably transparent through the text of MDA and IK. Despite presenting it at an epistemology conference with an explicit axis in the discussion of my book, they omit any reference to the development I make in it about the historical determinations of the scientific method. I focus this development on contrasting the *reproduction of the concrete through thought*, as the scientific method proper to the working class in the revolutionary overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, to the *logical representation of the concrete* as the scientific method proper to the valorization of capital. Not only do I dedicate a third of the book specifically to this development, but it is explicitly present throughout the work. Again the questions arise: Could it be that this omission of a question that is certainly fundamental to the discussion raised by MDA and IK "reveals the uncommitted, or naïve at best" character with which they have read my book? Or could it be that it reveals that their will is the bearer of a social determination that forces them to avoid the true axis of the discussion to prevent it from overflowing the ideological channel that they try to impose on it through the naturalization of representation as an ahistorically necessary method of science?

Here we can only return to the question of the relationship between knowledge and action, but now approaching it as the concrete whose necessity we must appropriate through its reproduction in thought. In my book I begin the section "The historical subject of dialectical knowledge" of the chapter "Dialectical knowledge", precisely by synthesizing how logical representation fulfills the ideological function of generating an apparent separation between knowledge and action (to which the entanglements of MDA and IK around the question testify), in contrast to the way in which the reproduction of the concrete through thought recognizes from the outset that knowledge is the form of action in which it governs itself:

> The apparent separation between knowledge and practice arises from the nature of the historical stage of humanity's development in which the organization of the process of social metabolism by means of consciousness—the specifically human organization of the process of social metabolism—becomes alienated, becoming the concrete form of the autonomous organization of this process through the production of value. Only at this historical stage can scientific knowledge appear to deny its true immediate condition in a way that necessarily governs conscious action. Moreover, it can even appear as the negation of the action itself, as the abstract opposite to it. That is, it can appear as theoretical knowledge. On the contrary, the reproduction of one's own concrete real necessity by means of thought shows in the very form of its method – that is, as *dialectical knowledge* – that it excludes any appearance of externality with respect to the action that governs. It is shown, therefore, for what it is: the organization of such an action, that is, a specific portion of this action and, consequently, this action itself. Scientific research thus overcomes any appearance of being the abstract opposite of practice, to assert itself as *practical criticism*. (JIC, p. 270)

On the basis of the appearance that on the one hand there is knowledge and, on the other hand, action, theoretical representation reaches in its historical development its fullest ideological form as an apologetics of capital. It does so by proclaiming the impossibility of action with full knowledge of the facts, that is, with full knowledge of the determinations of the subject's own potentiality with respect to those of the environment on which he is going to

act:

> Scientific theory itself has already shown that it is logically impossible - whatever logic is used - to reach certainty about the reasons for a given human action beyond its appearances. Therefore, scientific theories are reduced to being ways of *interpreting* the world in different ways. (JIC, p. 1)

> …scientific theories cannot go beyond interpreting reality in various ways. They are forms of interpreting the world. No matter how potent the action founded upon a theory may be in transforming reality, it is in itself the negation of the action that fully grasps its own necessity—beyond all appearances—insofar as it is grounded in such an interpretation. […] Any interpretation of a real determination is, in itself, the negation of the knowledge of that determination which has advanced beyond every appearance it presents; the interpretation of necessity itself is the negation of its full objective knowledge. Yet the general conscious organization of social life implies that objective knowledge on the part of every member of society—regarding their determinations as such a member, and transcending all appearances—becomes constituted as the general social relation. Consequently, insofar as scientific knowledge is condemned to interpretation, the general conscious organization of social life is condemned to impossibility. In other words, insofar as scientific theory constitutes the finished form of scientific knowledge, socialism/communism is condemned to impossibility. (JIC, pp. 251-252)

In the realization of this ideological determination of theirs, theoretical representation develops a specific form that has become dominant today in the field of knowledge of social forms:

> It is no longer even a question of confronting the real forms in order to interpret them in different ways. It is a matter of interpreting in different ways what others have said about reality... (JIC, p. 247)

> In short, it is the degradation of the integral knowledge of one's own necessity to an *interpretation* of reality and, therefore, to an *ideology*. Thus we reach the point where the question becomes to interpret the world by interpreting Marx in different ways. (JIC, p. 284)

This is exactly the method that MDA and IK use. Instead of confronting the real determinations that would lead them to confront their own determinations as subjects who know, they evade those determinations by appealing to the interpretation of texts. And, of course, thanks to carefully omitting that I have developed the critique of this method by opposing it with that of the reproduction of the concrete through thought, they interpret that my texts can have no other foundation than the interpretation of texts themselves:

> The use of the term "personifications" is not accidental, but invokes a metaphor from the prologue to Capital where Marx stated that "here we are only dealing with people insofar as they are the personification of economic categories, bearers of certain class relations and interests". And even more: understanding this metaphor literally will be the basis and sustenance of his theory and reading on the necessary transformation of the world.
>
> … By this we understand that in Marx, "personifications" refers to a metaphor and that there is no literality. (MDA and IK, pp. 3-4)

To answer us about the necessity that leads MDA and IK to want to drag me into their fantastic world of interpreting texts, we have no choice but to confront the simplest concrete determinations of our own consciousness by our social being, that is, by the way in which we organize our process of social metabolism. Chapter 1 of my book begins precisely with the development of these determinations. I have redeployed it (though only to the point of reaching the form of a commodity which the general social relation takes) in my book *Knowing Capital Today. Using "Capital" critically,* volume 1. Here I am going to present it taking as a starting

point my recent article "The Method, from the *Grundrisse* to *Capital*":

> This constitutes a human process of social metabolism—and, as such, a process in which labor feeds social consumption with its product. Each metabolic cycle thus begins with labor; and, in turn, the execution of labor begins with its organization. That is to say, society possesses a total labor force, which is embodied within the individual corporeality of its members. The organization of social labor consists of assigning to each individual the specific, concrete, and useful form in which they must expend their labor power in order to produce the corresponding use-values for others—that is, social use-values. In other modes of production, this assignment is resolved through direct relations of personal dependence among the members of society. However—even when viewed from the simplest determination currently before us—the capitalist mode of production is characterized as a society composed of individuals who are mutually free from personal dependence regarding the organization of social labor. It is a society in which individuals labor for one another without there existing between them any personal relationship that would enable them to organize this—their social labor. How, then, do they resolve this organization? At the moment when each individual must allocate their specific share of society's labor power to a particular, concrete, and useful task for others, these free individuals possess no social relationship with one another other than the fact that each of them embodies—within their own body—a certain generic capacity to perform socially useful labor: a social labor power in general. What, then, do they do? Each individual applies their share of labor power in general—that is, they materially expend their body through labor—in the specific form that their consciousness, as a free individual, dictates will satisfy a social need. In other words, they organize the concrete form of their social labor privately and independently of the very individuals for whom they are laboring. Yet, the recognition of the socially useful character of their labor is not a private attribute of their own, but rather a private attribute residing within the consciousness of others. It concerns, therefore, the power possessed by others to recognize the social character of the labor performed by each individual—not at the actual moment of its performance, when each acted privately and independently of the others, but rather once said labor has already been materialized in its product. Consequently, this reciprocal recognition does not take the form of direct personal recognition, but rather that of indirect recognition. This is established through the equalization of those products in exchange, viewed as materializations of that singular social relationship existing among the producers at the very moment when each of them was compelled to give a specific concrete form—privately and independently—to their general capacity for labor. If that generic labor-power has been applied appropriately—that is, if abstract labor has materialized in a concrete, socially useful form—the materiality of that very labor manifests as the social attribute enabling its product to relate, in exchange, to another bearer of an equivalent materialization. In other words, the materiality of socially necessary abstract labor manifests as the *value* of its product, and the latter thereby acquires its specific social determination as a *commodity*. This is the indirect manner in which the material unity of social production—the organization of which is governed privately and independently—asserts itself. The value-form assumed by commodities constitutes the general social relationship that private and independent producers indirectly establish among themselves. Through this medium, they allocate the materiality of their capacity to productively expend their physical energy in general—that is, to perform socially necessary abstract labor—by applying that materiality in the corresponding concrete, useful forms.
>
> Because he carries out his work privately and independently, the commodity producer exercises full control over the individual character of that work, yet lacks any control whatsoever over its social character. The powers of his own individual labor—in relation to the unity of the process of social metabolism—lie completely beyond his control. Consequently, he is compelled to subordinate his consciousness and will as a free individual to the social powers embodied in the product of his labor. The attributes of his human personality—his consciousness and will—must function as attributes of his commodity, personifying it; or, simply put, they must take the production of value as their immediate objective. Value—and, by extension, the capacity to participate in the organization of social labor and, subsequently, in social consumption—is not a personal attribute of his. It is an attribute external to his person; it belongs to his commodity. The material product of the labor that has privately and independently governed his consciousness and will as a free individual now confronts him as the bearer of a social power—a power alien to him, and to which his consciousness and will as

> a free individual are now subject. Thus, the free consciousness and will of the commodity producer constitute the very form through which the alienation of his consciousness and will—as attributes of the commodity—is realized. His free consciousness is the specific form assumed by his consciousness as it becomes alienated within the commodity. (JIC, "El método…", pp. 21-22)

Where is there an interpretation of texts here? All there is is the exposition of the process in which a subject of action confronts his own real determinations and develops the social necessity that takes concrete form in that action. It is, therefore, the process in which this subject organizes its action with the necessity for an action that knows its determinations, that is, develops its freedom, overcoming the immediate appearance of enclosing an abstract ahistorical freedom devoid of alienation.

Let us continue to advance on the concrete forms that this objectified social relation takes and, therefore, the consciousness of the subjects of action in the capitalist mode of production. To get straight to the point, I limit myself here to stating the course followed: the immediate object of social production is not the mere production of value but the continuous valorization of value, the production of surplus value on an enlarged scale, that is, the accumulation of capital. The objectified capacity of the product of privately performed social labour to organise that same labour sets it in motion with the immediate aim of producing more of the objectified capacity for private organisation of social labour. The enlarged reproduction of the very reified form of social labour is determined as the immediate object of that organisation. The general social relation with which the process of human life is governed does not have as its immediate object the reproduction of human life, but the reproduction of itself. Therefore, this objectified social relation, capital, is determined as the concrete subject of the process of social metabolism. Something that I discover, far from interpreting texts, when I move forward asking my political action about the content of necessity that determines it. Of course, this discovery of capital as a subject does not belong to me in an original way, since I have carried it out as a process of recognition from the social point of view because it has the path originally opened by Marx:

> On the other hand, in circulation **M-C-M** both the *commodity* and money *function* only as *different modes of existence of value itself* [...] Value constantly passes from one form to another, without getting lost in that movement, thus becoming an automatic subject. […] *Value* here becomes the *subject of a process in which*, by continually changing the forms of money and commodities, it modifies its own magnitude, as surplus-value detaches itself from itself as original value, it becomes *self-valorized*. The movement in which it adds surplus-value is in fact its own movement, and its valorization, therefore, *self-valorization*. It has obtained the hidden quality of adding value because it is value [...] As the dominant subject of such a process, in which it now assumes the form of money or the commodity form, now it divests itself of them, but by preserving itself and extending itself in these exchanges, value needs first of all an autonomous form, in which its identity with itself is ascertained. And that form is possessed only in *money*. […] If, in simple circulation, the value of commodities in comparison with their use-value at most takes the autonomous form of money, here it suddenly appears as a substance in process, endowed with its own motion, for which the commodity and money are merely forms. But even more. Instead of representing commodity relations, it now appears, if we may say so, in a *private relation to itself*. […] Value, then, becomes *value in process*, *money in process*, and in that character, *capital*. (Marx, *Capital*, I, Siglo XXI, pp. 188-189)

Well, people are the subject of one's own life process, which we give way to through labor. To do this, we organize our social labor, that is, we develop our social relationship. But here we find that, as capital, our social relation, that is, our capacity to organize our own social labor, confronts us as a capacity objectified in the product of that same labor. It confronts us as an autonomous capacity, which automatically sets our social work in motion. That is, it sets this work in motion without our conscience and will as human persons being able to control this implementation. And not only does it do so, but its immediate purpose is to reproduce itself, without our conscience and will as human persons being able to control this end. But consciousness and will are the way in which the human person carries within himself his

capacity to organize his individual work and his participation in social work, that is, they are the way in which the person realizes the determinations of his social being. Therefore, the consciousness and will of the people in the capitalist mode of production is the executor of that objectified social relation which, at the same time, they cannot control. Free consciousness is concretely determined as the form of alienated consciousness in capital.

Since the starting point of each cycle of social life opens with the private organization of social labor, we find ourselves first of all with the development of the consciousness and will that most simply personifies this organization:

> As a conscious vehicle of this movement, the owner of money becomes a capitalist. Your person, or, more precisely, your pocket, is the starting point and return of money. The *objective content* of this circulation – the valorization of value – is its *subjective* end, and only to the extent that the increasing appropriation of abstract wealth is the only motive driving its operations does it function as *a* capitalist, that is, as personified capital, endowed with consciousness and will.
>
> ... It is only as *capital personified* that the capitalist has a historical value and that historical right to existence which, as the ingenious Lichnowski says, no date does not have. Only in this case is its own transitory necessity inherent in the *transitory necessity of the capitalist mode of production*. But as capital personified, its motive is not use-value and enjoyment, but exchange-value and its increase. As a fanatic of the valorization of value, the capitalist *relentlessly* constrains humanity to *produce for the sake of producing*, and consequently to develop the *social productive forces* and to create *material conditions of production* which alone are capable of constituting the real basis of a higher social formation whose fundamental principle is the full and free development of each individual. The capitalist is respectable only as the personification of capital.

By the way, this is not a quote from me but from Marx (*Capital*, I, pp. 186-187 and 731). As even MDA and IK can see, I use the term "personification" in exactly the same rigorous way that Marx defines it: the consciousness and will of a person that are determined as the bearers of his or her reified social relation. Moreover, Marx stresses the fact that the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production does not arise from action under the condition of person ("use value and enjoyment") but under the condition of personification: the question is the development of the social productive forces and the materiality of production that are proper to the organization of work through that reified social relationship that individuals personify.

The prologue of a book is not the best place to find the rigorous way in which an author defines the term he reproduces a real concrete. But it is there that MDA and IK stop to "interpret" that the term personification is, for Marx, nothing but a "metaphor". Once again, the questions arise: Could it be that their ignorance of the explicit determination Marx provides regarding the determination of consciousness and will—as the personification of the reified social relation (a usage, incidentally, in complete accord with the term's use in the Preface)—and regarding its role as the bearer of the supersession of the capitalist mode of production, "reveals the uncommitted—or, at best, naive—attitude" with which MDA and IK have read *Capital*? Or does it perhaps reveal that their own will is determined as a specific personification of that very same reified social relation—one whose concrete existential necessity lies in ideologically denying the very existence of *any* personification—all under the guise of being critical of that reified social relation itself, simply by invoking the name of a Marx who has been drained of all substance? Is it not the case that, behind this erasure of the personification—conceived as the bearer of a "free consciousness" that is, in fact, merely the *form* of an *alienated consciousness* within the reified social relation—there lies an attempt to ideologically obliterate the discovery of the specific historical potentialities of subjects within the capitalist mode of production? Is the aim not, under a veneer of critique, to reduce these potentialities to an abstract "political will"—a will attributed to the notion that these subjects' natural condition as free persons is merely held captive by the "problem" (sic) of a historically nonspecific "exploitation of man by man"? Let us return to the specific historical determination of the consciousness and will of the subject who—to put it more simply—performs socially organized labor in a privately organized

manner: the worker who is free from personal dependence and from ownership of the means of production, and who possesses nothing but his own labor-power to sell as a commodity:

> In order to bind these things together as commodities, the custodians of them must relate to each other as *persons* whose *will* resides in those objects, [...] This *legal relationship*, whose form is the *contract* [...] is a *relationship between wills* in which the economic relationship is reflected. The *content* of such *a legal relationship* or *relationship between wills* is *given* by the economic relationship itself. Here, people exist only for each other as representatives of the commodity, and therefore as *owners of commodities*. In the further course of our analysis we shall see that the masks that people assume in the economic sphere are nothing more than personifications of economic relations as bearers of which these people confront each other. (Marx, *Capital*, I, pp. 103-104)

Therefore, the worker exercises his general social relation to the determined consciousness and will as the personification of his commodity, labour-power:

> You pay me for one day's labor power, but you consume three's labor. This contravenes our agreement and the law of mercantile exchange. I demand, therefore, a working day of *normal duration*, and I demand it without appealing to your heart, since in matters of money benevolence is totally superfluous. […] I demand the *normal working day* because I demand the *value* of my commodity, like any other seller [...] On the other hand, the specific nature of the commodity sold brings with it a limit to the buyer's consumption of it, and the worker reaffirms his right as a seller when he seeks to reduce the working day to a certain normal magnitude. Here, then, an *antinomy* takes place: right versus right, both uniformly marked by the law of commodity exchange. Between equal rights, force decides. And so, in the history of capitalist production, the regulation of the working day appears as a *struggle over the limits of the working day*, a struggle between the collective capitalist, i.e., the *class of capitalists*, and the collective worker, i.e., the *working class*. (Marx, *Capital*, I, pp. 281-282)

When confronted with the necessity of my political action, I find exactly these same determinations and reproduce them in my book saying, in a synthesis:

> Let us observe more closely the course followed by our advance in the specific terrain of the present social forms, that is, of the capitalist mode of organizing the process of social metabolism. The general social relation took before us the form of an indirect relation between persons, mediated by the determination of the material products of privately performed social labour as exchangeable objects, as commodities. In this general indirect relation, people submit their consciousness and will as free individuals to the social powers of their commodities. They only count in it as personifications of their commodities, powerless to relate directly to each other. But in the realization of this materialized general social relation, the commodity owners enter into relations which no longer bind them in a generally indirect way to all the others. They establish private relations that bind them directly—that is, consciously and voluntarily—as personifications of their commodities, for the time required for the perfection of their indirect social relation. For example, the relation between the debtor and his creditor, or the relation between a capitalist and a worker by the time in which the latter has sold his labour-power to the former. We are thus faced with the necessity to distinguish specifically the concrete forms in which the general social relationship is realized. For this purpose we call economic relations those in which the general social relation is realized by preserving its simple form of indirect relation between personifications of commodities mediated by the exchange of these themselves. And we call juridical relations those in which the exchange of commodities, the realization of their value, develops in the concrete form of a direct private relation between the personifications of commodities. We go on and find that, in order for labour-power to be sold normally for its value, it is not enough for the indirect relationship to take the form of a sum of direct relations of private scope. It is necessary that the general antagonistic relation between the worker and the capitalist throughout the working day - the one as the personification of his labour-power, the other as the personification of capital - should take the concrete form of the class struggle. That is, the establishment of a direct relationship – let us repeat, conscious and voluntary – of solidarity that extends with general scope between the personifications within

> each pole of the antagonistic relationship, determining them as working class and capitalist class. In turn, class determinations are subsumed in the direct – once again, conscious and voluntary – antagonistic relation, the class struggle, which thus reaches the universe of commodity personifications in the capitalist mode of production. The general indirect relation is thus realized in the concrete form of direct class relations, which we specifically distinguish as political relations. (JIC, pp. 267-268)

In the first place, it is Marx, and not I, who originally discovers the link between the economic relationship and the wills that governs the action of persons who relate to each other as personifications, that is, enter into a legal relationship with each other. And it is Marx who discovers that these relations between personifications develop by taking the concrete form of the class struggle, that is, of political relations. It is not about that more or less quantitative around which MDA and IK pluck the theoretical daisy of "not falling into economism, not falling into voluntarism". It is about the relationship between the content and its necessary way of being realized. The economic relation into which people enter indirectly with each other by means of commodities, i.e., the reified general social relation, always has as its concrete form of realization the action of wills which are directly opposed to each other as their political personifications. And these political actions always have as their content the indirect economic relationship. This is exactly what I have laid out in my book. Let us ask again: Could it be that the political will of MDA and IK, but not simply theirs but that of so many other Marxists even of the stature of Gramsci, explains by itself the reduction of this clear relationship between economic content and political form by "not falling into economism, not falling into voluntarism" empty of any qualitative unity? Or could it be that these political wills are the form taken by a determination of the indirect way of organizing social life that makes them reduce Marx's discovery of the relationship between political form and economic content to the quantitative indefiniteness of "not falling into economism, not falling into voluntarism", undermining its own revolutionary power when it stops before this appearance?

Second, it is Marx, and not I, who discovers that the worker gives way to his participation in each cycle of the process of social metabolism, that is, he opens his action in the exercise of his general social relation, not as a mere person but as a personification of his commodity. It is Marx who originally discovers that the worker is thus determined not simply individually but as a class in his struggle against the capitalist class: the working class concretely confronts the capitalist class, and therefore organizes its action through its consciousness and will determined as those of those who personify the concrete historical specificity of its reified social relation, and not with those of abstract people lacking the specific historical potentiality given by the capitalist mode of production, not with those of historically unspecific "men exploited by man", typical of past and present unscientific socialism. And it is Marx who originally discovers that the class struggle is not only a relationship between collectives of personifications but the concrete way in which these personifications act giving way to the normality of their reified social relation and, therefore, to the reproduction of it.

In the process of organizing my political action, that is, in the process of knowing my determinations as a concrete political subject, I have advanced on these determinations with the power of carrying out a process of recognition as soon as I have had the knowledge originally produced by Marx. Questions: On what basis can MDA and IK argue that in their political will they "coincide with Marx" and at the same time condemn exactly the same foundation that Marx presents for the determination of the political action of the working class as "economism" that "poses passive subjects"? Could it be that this contradiction "reveals" that it is not really "the uncommitted, or naïve at best" character with which MDA and IK have read *Capital*, but that they have not even read it? Although the answer to this question seems obvious, the ones that really matter are the following: Could it be that the political will of MDA and IK carries the necessity to transform Marx's discovery of the historically specific determinations of the working class into a dead letter, replacing it with the invocation of a historically unspecific "exploitation of man by man" under the cover of presenting itself under the guise of being revolutionarily critical of the capitalist mode of production by invoking the name of Marx? Could it be that the very necessity that determines this political will leaves it with no other

recourse than to beat its chest clamoring for its self-determined condition as a revolutionary and to accuse of "economism" and "passivity" the action that makes it evident when confronted with the same determinations discovered by Marx? Could it be that the necessity carried by the political will in question is to make the working class a "passive subject" with respect to its own historically specific determinations by emptying the organization of political action of it of consciousness with respect to those determinations?

Let us continue with the development of the necessity for the working class as a revolutionary subject, entering the process of privately carried out social production, where material production is the vehicle for the production of the general social relation, that is, of capital. It is also Marx, and not I, who originally discovers how the development of the concrete forms which the realization of the process of production takes in the capitalist mode of production, starting from its organization as a process of production of absolute surplus value and developing the necessity of it under the various forms of the production of relative surplus value, it transforms the materiality of work. And it is Marx who originally discovers how this material transformation transforms the productive attributes of the worker as the subject of the labor process, actually subsuming him into capital, that is, determining him as a subject that is included in capital. Once again, it is Marx who discovers that the worker as the subject of his own general social relation, i.e., as the personification of labour-power, does not rule this relation by himself, but is an attribute of it. In summary:

> The production of absolute surplus-value revolves only around the extension of the working day; the production of relative surplus-value thoroughly and radically revolutionizes the technical processes of labour and social groupings. The production of relative surplus-value, therefore, presupposes a *specifically capitalist mode of production*, which with its methods, means and conditions only arises and develops, spontaneously, on the basis of the formal subsumption of labour in capital. In place of formal subsumption, *the real subsumption of labour in capital enters the scene*. (Marx, *Capital*, I, p. 618)

In the same way as I pointed out before, in the process of organizing my action as a concrete political subject I have faced these same determinations. And not only to them but to the forms that they have developed since Marx discovered them until the present. In my book I synthesize the determinations of the worker's subjectivity by the transformation of the materiality of labor governed by the production of relative surplus value as follows:

> In the first place, the machinery system degrades the productive subjectivity of the worker who acquires and applies his manual expertise in the direct process of production. It makes it an appendage of the objectified control of natural forces, that is, an appendage of machinery. As a result, their work is constantly disqualified, stripped of all content beyond the mechanical repetition of an increasingly simple task. His productive attributes follow a course that resembles that of the working subject to the manufacturing division of labor. […] Second, accumulation on the basis of the extraction of relative surplus value through the machinery system transforms an increasing portion of the working population into surplus for the needs of capital. Capital is the general social relation of the working population, i.e., the general relation into which the working class enters in order to reproduce its natural life. So to be transformed into surplus for capital means to be deprived of the exercise of the capacity to produce one's natural life. Capital thus wrests from the workers' overpopulation every last trace of productive subjectivity, condemning it to death. Third, capital needs to develop the productive subjectivity of the portion of the working class whose participation in the collective worker corresponds to the development of the latter's capacity to advance in the universal control of natural forces and in the conscious control of the very collective character of his labor. […] The productive consciousness which governs the activity of the collective worker of the machinery system intervenes in the direct process of production [...] as the product itself of a scientific consciousness. And it is precisely the development of this scientific consciousness that it is responsible for providing the collective worker with the portion of the latter which acts as his organ for the development of his capacity to control the natural forces to be applied in direct production. (JIC, pp. 57-58)

At the end of his working day, the worker continues his process of social metabolism outside the direct control that capital exercises over him in his place of work. But this does not mean that he is not determined in his action by the reified social relationship with which he governs his life:

> The *individual consumption* of the worker thus remains an element of the production and reproduction of capital [...] The fact that the worker makes this consumption for his own benefit and not to please the capitalist, changes nothing in the nature of the matter. […] The constant preservation and reproduction of the working class remains a constant condition for the reproduction of capital. […] The individual consumption of the worker, therefore, is in general an element of the process of reproduction of capital. […] From the social point of view, the working class, even when it is outside the direct labour process, is an *accessory* of capital [...] The constant change of individual pattern and the *fictio juris* [legal fiction] of the contract, maintain the appearance that the wage-earner is independent. (Marx, *Capital*, I, pp. 703-6)

It is Marx, and not I, who discovers that "from the social point of view, the working class, even when it is outside the direct labour process, is an *accessory* (an *attribute* translates FCE) of capital". And then, why should it not be the hackneyed "political will" of MDA and IK, as well as that of the other of their "readers of reality" who "openly assume their unity of theory and action [...] understanding the necessity for a conscious transformation of the world", an accessory or attribute of capital? And it is not just any accessory, but one that carries the necessity to deny that its will is determined like that of such an accessory under the pseudocritical mask of being based on "interpreting" what has been said by the one who has discovered that it is. But there is more:

> The capitalist process of production, therefore, reproduces by its own development the *split* between labor power and working conditions. It reproduces and perpetuates, with it, the conditions of exploitation of the worker [...] In reality, the worker belongs to capital even before he sells himself to the capitalist. His economic servitude is at once mediated and concealed by the periodic renewal of the sale of himself, by the change of his individual pattern and the oscillation in the market of the price of labor. The capitalist process of production, considered in its interdependence or as a process of reproduction, therefore, not only produces commodities, not only produces surplus-value, but also produces and reproduces the *capitalist relation* itself: on the one hand *the capitalist*, on the other *the wage-earner*. (Marx, *Capital*, I, pp. 711-2)

He remarked: "Value constantly passes from one form to another, without getting lost in that movement, thus becoming an automatic subject [...] As the dominant *subject* of such a process [...] it becomes [...] *capital*"; " From the social point of view, the working class, even when it is outside the direct labor process, is an *accessory* of capital"; "In reality, the worker belongs to capital even before he sells himself to the capitalist"; "The capitalist process of production, considered in its interdependence or as a process of reproduction, [...] produces and reproduces [...] *the salaried employee*".

Are these so many "metaphors"? Could it be that the reading of *Capital* differs from that of *The Bible* because one consists of interpreting metaphors and the other of interpreting parables? Certainly not. The quotations in question are the rigorous synthetic exposition, the reproduction through thought, of the general concrete ways in which people currently organize their process of social metabolism. In this mode of organization, people are determined as bearers of our reified social relationship, which produces and reproduces us as its attributes. It is a social relation autonomized from the consciousness and will of the people, which automatically sets in motion social work, determining this consciousness and will as a personification that has the task of doing so, not with the immediate object of producing social use values, and therefore human beings, but with the immediate object of producing extensively and intensively more of the same autonomous social relation. Hence its historically specific power for the development of the productive forces of social labour, of which it makes those

who personify it as bearers; but hence also the historically specific barriers that it erects to that development, and of which it also makes its personifications bearers.

As has been shown so far by the determinations discovered by Marx, in its reproduction capital produces and reproduces the working class as its attribute. Thus, only if capital in its very reproduction as a historically specific form of development of the productive forces of social labour carries within itself the necessity for its own supersession, that attribute of its own, the working class, can carry within itself the determination to be the subject whose action brings about this revolutionary supersession. And indeed, the necessity of this determination was also originally discovered by Marx:

> ... Capital itself – whose abstract counterpart is its concept – is the basis of bourgeois society. From the correct conception of the fundamental presupposition of the relation, all the contradictions of bourgeois production must be derived, as well as the limit before which it itself tends to overcome itself. (Marx, *Grundrisse*, Volume 1, p. 273)

> Capital [...] It operates destructively against all this, it is constantly revolutionary, it breaks down all barriers that hinder the development of the productive forces, the expansion of needs, the diversity of production, and the exploitation and exchange of natural and spiritual forces. […] Even more. The universality to which it is constantly tending finds obstacles in its own nature, which at a certain stage of the development of capital will cause it to be recognized as the greatest barrier to this tendency, and consequently will tend to the abolition of capital by means of itself. (Marx, *Grundrisse*, volume 1, p. 362)

> But evidently this process of inversion [[alienation]] is only a historical necessity, a simple necessity for the development of the productive forces from a definite historical basis or point of departure, but by no means an *absolute necessity* of production; rather it is a passing necessity and the result and (immanent) purpose of this process is to abolish that same basis. as well as that form of the process [...] The conditions for being such social individuals in the reproduction of their life, in their productive vital process, are only laid down by the historical economic process itself; both objective and subjective conditions, which are nothing more than two different forms of the same conditions. (Marx, *Grundrisse*, Volume 2, p. 395)

In summary, Marx discovers that the “subjective conditions” which define the working class—both as an attribute of capital and as the active subject of the transcendence of the capitalist mode of production in the construction of a society of “social individuals”—“are posited solely by the historical economic process itself”; that is to say, they lack any determination superimposed upon that process. And he discovers that historical necessity—the “result and (immanent) aim” of the capitalist mode of production—is “to abolish that very basis as well as that form of process,” such that capital, which is “constantly revolutionary” and “tears down all barriers hindering the development of productive forces,” […] “encounters fetters within its own nature—fetters which, at a certain stage of capital’s development,” constitute “the limit before which it itself [bourgeois production] tends to transcend itself”; in other words, they “will tend toward the abolition of capital by means of capital itself.”

This is precisely what I have recognized, taking as my concrete object the organization of the working class's action as a revolutionary subject. And, to leave no room for doubt, I call upon MDA and IK as witnesses:

> For JIC, the actors are bearers and supports of capital. The role they play in work is determined by it. From this point of view, the worker can only revalue(sic) value, reproduce capital. Their consciousness, alienated [...] is determined by capital. And even more: it understands that this struggle [of the workers against capitalist oppression] is part of the process of reproduction of capital.
>
> … If the action of the worker is always circumscribed to the reproduction of capital, who is the subject of transformation for JIC? How does the worker become the subject of transformation? JIC raises it from the title of his book: "Capital: Historical Reason, Revolutionary Subject and Consciousness". That is to say, capital is the one who, through its

> historical reason (development of the productive forces to obtain relative surplus value), determines the consciousness of the character who will make the revolution (the working class). So capital is the revolutionary subject. This is so because "Capital carries with it the necessity to annihilate itself as a power of its own." (MDA and IK, pp. 3-4)

In their text, MDA and IK say several times that they agree with Marx about the determinations of human historical subjectivity. Consequently, anyone would say that they must agree with me in the recognition of the determinations of the working class as an active revolutionary subject bearing the specific historical powers to overcome, not only the capitalist mode of production, but "the exploitation of man by man", in the gestation of the society of social individuals. But no, their conclusion places them at the antipodes of that recognition:

> Put like this, for us, JIC proposes passive subjects. (MDA and IK, p. 4)

Why, when Marx discovers that "from the social point of view, the working class [...] is an *accessory* of capital", that "the capitalist process of production [...] produces and reproduces the *capitalist relation* itself: on the one hand *the capitalist*, on the other *the wage-earner*", but that this capitalist relation carries within itself the obstacles that "will tend to the abolition of capital by means of itself", so that "the historical economic process itself" determines the subjects with "the conditions to be such social individuals in the reproduction of their life, in their productive life process", what they are doing is "proposing passive subjects"? What is the necessity that MDA and IK carry that makes them scandalized by the same thing that Marx poses when I raise it, pretending that they do it in the name of Marx himself? Without a doubt, as MDA and IK say

> It is important to discuss the thesis that capital annihilates itself because of the political consequences that this can have on the revolutionary struggle. (MDA and IK, p. 4)

But, then, why don't they start by discussing it with respect to who has originally discovered the determination in question (which is certainly not a "thesis" as MDA and IK claim only because they know how to move in a world made of "interpretations")? No doubt such a discussion would have much more far-reaching "political consequences" on "the revolutionary struggle" than those that would result from discussing my recognition of the same determination. Could it be that MDA and IK suffer from a certain intellectual timidity that inhibits them from directly questioning Marx? Or could it be that MDA and IK do not even know Marx's developments, and even more, that they are not interested in knowing them, in order to fulfill the ideological role of fabricating a "Marx" in the image and likeness of their opportune "political wills"? Could it be that they are thus fulfilling their determination as producers of "ideological interpretations" for pseudo-critical consumption that undermines the revolutionary potential of the action of the working class in overcoming the capitalist mode of production by emptying it of the consciousness of its own determination? Is it not because of this necessity of theirs that they celebrate the optimistic will of those who are ignorant of reason and are pessimistic that reason is the one that discovers, and therefore governs, the historically specific revolutionary powers of the working class? Is it not because of this very necessity of theirs that they proclaim "revolutionary" the "political wills" that cling to immediate appearances without asking themselves about their content and disqualify as "scientific" the organization of the action of the working class through the scientific knowledge of their own determinations?

In any case, let's accompany the "passive subjects" of MDA and IK in their actions to see what they tell us, more than about themselves, about the ideology of their authors:

> … JIC states that the worker possesses an "abstractly free" consciousness, which means a consciousness that manifests itself as free but that its reality is the opposite: it is determined by capital. The workers who struggle against capitalist oppression fall, according to their position, into the same misfortune. And even more: it understands that this struggle, in any case, is part of the process of reproduction of capital. So in short, we could understand that the struggle

> (worker, peasant, student, gender, etc.) has no meaning insofar as it is part of the reproduction of capital. (MDA and IK, p. 4)

First of all, it is confirmed here that MDA and IK have read my book as prisoners of the ideological necessities that determine them as "political wills": nowhere do I say the nonsense that "the worker possesses an 'abstractly free' consciousness." What I am saying is that the consciousness of the worker as an individual free from personal dependence is the form in which his consciousness is alienated as an attribute of his general social relation, i.e., alienated in capital. And what I am saying is that those who do not know this determination attribute to the worker having an abstractly free consciousness insofar as they empty it of determination by its alienation in capital. But it is not in vain that MDA and IK ignore any relationship between content and form. For them, as befits their conception of logical representation as an ahitorically necessary proceeding of scientific knowledge, there can be no other content than form, which is thus reduced to a mere appearance.

On this basis, MDA and IK believe that, as a historically determined way of organizing the development of the productive forces of social labor, capital does not contain the necessity for its own supersession. Since the form is the reproduction of capital, then they believe that the content cannot be the necessity of its supersession; No, all that can be is the form itself, that is, the reproduction of capital. It seems to them, as it does to all the practitioners of logical representation, that there is no determination other than immediate abstract affirmation, that nothing can be affirmed by its own negation, and that therefore every movement is external to its own determinations. Hence his "we could understand that the struggle (worker, peasant, student, gender, etc.) has no meaning insofar as it is part of the reproduction of capital."

The emptying of the specific historical content means that MDA and IK cannot even refer to the revolutionary subject in the unity of its determination as a working class. On the contrary, for them there is no room for unity other than appearance, so that the revolutionary subject in its unity (the "worker"), is placed as one more next to what is massively one of its own specific forms ("the students"), as well as social subjects orphaned of historical potentiality to overcome capitalism ("the peasants") and even of subjects emptied of their class specificity ("of gender", which obviously includes both members of the working class and the capitalist class).

In the same way, MDA and IK reveal the external manner in which they conceive of the worker’s consciousness regarding their own social being. For them, the determination of the worker’s consciousness by their general social relation—that is, the way in which the worker acts as the bearer of their participation in the organization of their social life-process under the specific historical mode of capital accumulation—does not constitute the worker’s social being, but rather a “misfortune.”

Now, if alienation in capital is a "misfortune" that falls on the consciousness of the worker, then the worker must first have a consciousness engendered independently of this "misfortune" in order that it can fall upon him. Where would this presumed awareness come from? Could it be that MDA and IK believe that the worker has an even more general social relation than his objectified social relation, i.e., that he has a social being determined outside the way in which he actively participates in the development of the process of social metabolism governed by capital? Could it be that, in the best style of Holloway and others, they believe that this presumed more general social relation, which goes beyond capitalism, springs from the existence in human beings of a natural resistance to being exploited? But, since for there to be resistance to exploitation there must first be the will to exploit, would it not be postulated that the exploitation of man by man is eternal since it would spring from a human nature even deeper than the resistance to exploitation? In any case, if MDA and IK believed in the existence of a social relation alien to the movement of the reified social relation, and of which it would be postulated to be the true source of the determination of the working class as a revolutionary subject, they would have to begin by demonstrating such an existence. However, the ideological necessity that determines the conception of MDA and IK limits them to the uncritical conformism of seeking no more determination of the will of the

subjects than the immediate appearance of that will itself:

> And this is why the oppressed cannot sit idly by waiting for capital to assign them a line in the script that tells them that their character's time has come. Even when that moment came, the bourgeoisie would not willingly accept and would fight for the modification of the script [...] If the action of the oppressed is a non-action in the expectation of the hour that will come for the development of capital itself, instead of fostering the prompt organization of those from below, they may never come to know a new society.
> (MDA and IK, p. 4)

In a new step towards the conception of wills abstracted from their own general social relation, MDA and IK no longer limit themselves to mixing the worker with other social subjects whom this same social relation of theirs deprives them of any revolutionary potential to overcome the capitalist mode of production. Here the specific historical determination of the working class as a revolutionary subject is directly reduced to the historically unspecific categories of "the oppressed" and "those from below." Having done this, MDA and IK reach the key point in their process of separating human action from its determination by the social being of the subjects. It happens that, as is inherent in the very method of logical representation, they find themselves prisoners of the appearance that there can be no more content than form and no form other than content. Consequently, the only dialectic that MDA and IK know is what Marx defines as the dialectic proper to the petty-bourgeois: the dialectic of "on the one hand" and "on the other side". On the one hand, there are the subjects: on the other hand, there is their social relationship. On the one hand, there is the day-to-day action or "non-action" of "the oppressed" and the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, there is the development of capital. On the one hand, there is the action of the subjects, lacking in determination due to their general social relation; that is, on the one hand, there is no content other than the form. On the other hand, there is the movement of the general social relation that takes place by itself outside of any action of the subjects; that is, on the other hand, there is no other form than the content.

MDA and IK are incapable of confronting the character of the relationship in a truly dialectical way: there is no development of capital that is not realized in the necessary concrete form of the political action of the working class and the bourgeoisie; there is no political action of the working class and the bourgeoisie other than the way in which the development of capital is realized. That is, the social relation carries out its determination under the necessary concrete form of the voluntary action of the subjects; the voluntary action of the subjects is the way in which they give way to the development of their own social relationship, that is, to the organization of their process of social metabolism. And since the capitalist mode of production is a form of this organization whose historical specificity is given by its necessity to develop the productive forces of social labor until it surpasses itself, it is this historical specificity that is realized by taking the necessary concrete form of the revolutionary will with which the working class governs its action in bringing about this supersession. The working class does not passively wait for the capitalist mode of production to be superseded, not because "perhaps [...] they never come to know a new society," but because the general social relation with which the working class itself organizes its social life, i.e., capital, develops its own historical determination by taking the concrete form of the revolutionary action of the working class. As Marx sums it up:

> It is not a question of knowing what this or that proletarian, or even the entire proletariat, momentarily proposes as an end. It is a question of knowing what the proletariat is and what it must do historically according to its being." (*The Holy Family*, Editorial Claridad, 1971, p. 51)

What then is the subject that MDA and IK present to us? It is a subject empty of determination by its social being, and therefore empty of its own social being, which governs its action with no other determination than the "reading of reality" that makes its free "political will". So that their social interdependence appears to be imposed externally on his person, as a "misfortune" that restricts the natural freedom of his will. Under the guise of speaking in the name of revolutionary action to overcome capital, MDA and IK do nothing but cultivate the

most vulgar illusion of bourgeois ideology. Such is its ideology, such is its political role against the development of the action of the working class, which is the bearer of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production and, consequently, needs to organize itself through the objective knowledge of its own determinations.

For MDA and IK, the freedom of the worker consists in declaring the will of the worker empty of determination as the bearer of the social relation with which he organizes his life. This is the same lack of freedom that someone who declares himself free of determination by the force of gravity and jumps without a parachute from an airplane in flight has. He will later discover that it was only an appearance. On the contrary, the freedom of the worker consists in recognizing himself as the bearer of the determinations proper to his social relation and, consequently, as the bearer of the specific historical powers with which the same social relation determines him as a revolutionary subject.

In my book I transcribe the synthesis made by Engels regarding the freedom of the will as a concrete way of realizing determination. Here I do it once again:

> Freedom does not consist in a dreamed independence from natural laws, but in the recognition of those laws and in the possibility, thus given, of making them work according to a plan for certain ends. This is true of the laws of external nature as well as of those which regulate the somatic and spiritual being of man himself: two kinds of laws which we can at most separate in representation, not in reality. Freedom of the will means, therefore, nothing more than the capacity to be able to decide with knowledge of the facts. The *freer* a human being's judgment is on a given problematic point, the more *necessarily* the content of that judgment will be determined; while the insecurity due to ignorance and which chooses with apparent discretion between different and contradictory possibilities of decision thus proves its own infreedom, its situation of being dominated by the very object it should dominate. Freedom, then, consists in mastery over ourselves and over external nature, based on the knowledge of natural necessities; that is why it is necessarily a product of historical evolution. (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, OME 35, p. 104)

The supposed freedom of the will of the revolutionary subject of MDA and IK consists in sitting down to meditate in the midst of a void of determination and facing the dilemma of 'do I fold my arms and wait for capitalism to fall on its own' or 'do I act so that it falls'? Engels' observation fits him perfectly: "the insecurity due to ignorance and which chooses with apparent arbitrariness between diverse and contradictory possibilities of decision thus proves its own infreedom, its situation of being dominated by the very object it should dominate." The true freedom of the will of the working class as a revolutionary subject consists in recognizing itself as that which, through its action governed by this consciousness, is the necessary concrete form in which the capitalist mode of production realizes its immanent necessity to annihilate itself in its own development.

Let us pause for a moment on the question of the concrete forms that necessity, that is, the more general determination of matter, takes in its realization. In my book I have developed how possibility is not the abstract negation of necessity but, on the contrary, its general form of realization. The current reproduction of capital, as the negation in itself of the historical necessity of capital, takes on a general concrete form in a consciousness which stops at the appearance of being abstractly free, and thus remains blind to its own alienation from capital and, consequently, to its own revolutionary powers. The universality of logical representation as a method of scientific consciousness, with its reduction of the relation between form and content to an immediate unity, is the concrete form in which this determination of the current reproduction of capital is realized. As I develop in my book, here ideology (i.e., the negation of objective knowledge) is carried in the very form of the scientific method. And this ideology of capital then emerges, in fulfillment of its reason for existence, trying to disqualify with the label of "determinist" the consciousness that recognizes that the development of its freedom starts from discovering itself in its alienation. To this end, this ideology of capital resorts to its own methodological basis: according to it, every necessity is an immediate necessity, that is, it realizes itself identical to itself, while it conceives of possibility as the equally immediate

negation of necessity. So, sheltered in its necessary narrow-mindedness, if its ideological discourse is opposed by the critique of the concrete through the discovery of the necessity of it, everything is imputed to this critique that must inevitably be based on the reduction of all necessity to one of an immediate character. Here again the content and form of the ideological inversion practiced by MDA and IK is evident, for which any attempt to advance beyond the appearance of self-explanatory "political wills" must be condemned as "determinism".

Having made this clarification, let us move on. At every moment and place in the development of human life in the capitalist mode of production, the objectified social relation produces the individuals who carry out the consciousnesses and wills that realize it. The objectified social relation is thus realized in the concrete form of the self-engendering of these consciousnesses and wills as determinate consciousnesses and wills. Obviously, each individual consciousness and will is a concrete of extreme complexity, where the simple necessity of its determination by the objectified social relation is realized under the necessary concrete form of the possibility that mediates itself in its realization. But what always emerges from this process are the individuals whose conscious and voluntary subjectivity carries out the movement of the objectified general social relation. And it is not, of course, that some individuals carry out this realization and that others do not, but that in their conscious and voluntary action, each and every one gives shape to the multiple concrete forms of social relation, thus reproducing the organization of his process of social metabolism and then of this same in its unity. A unity that, without going any further, includes the fact that the very objectified social relation of a growing mass of the working population determines it as the bearer of a subjectivity from whose consciousness and will the exercise of the generically human power to participate actively in the process of social production is wrested, and consequently in the process of social consumption.

In the concrete process in which each individual produces his or her consciousness, that is, governs his or her voluntary action, the dichotomy postulated by MDA and IK of "I do not act waiting for capitalism to fall on its own" or "I act and turn it upside down" is doubly false. In the first place, it is formally false, since for the human subject there is no such thing as "non-activity", but different forms of activity. So, since the individual acts in any case, his action will be the immediate bearer – to put it in simple terms – of the development of the capitalist mode of production towards its overcoming or of the simple reproduction of it as a negation of its supersession. Therefore, an action governed by the notion "I'll do something else; it's going to collapse anyway" reveals itself to be an action that requires governance by a consciousness unaware of its own determinations. And it remains unaware of them, regardless of whether that "something else" ultimately proves to be the vehicle for the development in question, or whether it proves to be the vehicle for the negation of that development.

Secondly, the dichotomy postulated by MDA and IK is really false, because the subjects do not face their individual determination as bearers or not of the development of the capitalist mode of production towards its supersession, under the abstract form thus proposed. On the contrary, they confront this determination in the concrete forms in which their social being determines them in their condition as subjects of the realization of the movement of capital. Determination does not consist in the fact that, on the one hand, there is the determinant and, on the other hand, there is the determinate, which are then put into a relationship with each other whose quality is never precisely defined, so it is reduced to the quantitative ambiguity of "not falling too much into determinism, not falling too much into voluntarism". On the contrary, determination consists in the fact that an actual existence realizes its potentiality by taking a certain concrete form. The fact that social being determines consciousness means that social being realizes its potentiality by taking the concrete form of action governed by each individual consciousness. I see consciousness, and then the action that it voluntarily governs, and what I see is the social being in action. But he who stops at the immediate appearance that there is no content other than form, looks at consciousness, and all he sees is a consciousness which has no more content than itself, and which is therefore self-explanatory. Again we have in this conception the ideological necessity that social being, as a social being alienated by capital, should take the necessary concrete form in a method of knowledge, that is, in a form of consciousness, which takes care to conceal its own determination by reducing it to the

appearance of its own form: the consciousness of the individual abstracted from his social being is thus presented inverted as the determinant in itself of the individual's action.

Conscience is not a natural gift, nor a divine grace, nor an attribute engendered by abstract individuality. Consciousness is the form of the human race that takes on the inherent capacity of animal species to organize their appropriation of the environment in the reproduction of their life process. Organizing one's own action consists of acting to appropriate the potentiality that that action can have with respect to the potentiality offered by the means on which it is going to be executed. That is, organizing action consists of acting to know one's own determinations with respect to those of the environment, in such a way as to trigger the full execution of the action, determining it as the necessary concrete form of realizing these potentialities in their unity. The human being is distinguished as a genus with respect to the animal species because his life process is not based on the immediate appropriation of the environment in order to reproduce his own body, but on the transformation of the environment by social work. That is, it is a process of social metabolism in which individuals affirm themselves as human subjects by reciprocally spending their bodies working so that others productively or individually consume the product of that work in the reproduction of their own bodies as human subjects. Consequently, the unity of the organization of the process of social metabolism is carried out in the process in which each human subject acts to know the determinations of his action as an individual organ of that unity. The social being of individuals takes concrete form in this process of knowledge. The very complexity of the unit in question, of social being itself, determines this process of individual knowledge as one that needs to take the concrete form of a process of knowledge, and therefore of the organization of one's own action, which knows itself as such, that is, as a process of conscious knowledge. Consciousness is the way in which each human subject realizes his social being by organizing his own individual action; individual consciousness is the social being in action. The determinations of social being are necessarily realized by taking the concrete form of actions that each individual subject governs through the conscious knowledge of his own determinations as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism.

It is the degree reached at each moment by the process of social metabolism in its historical development, that is, by the social being, which takes concrete form in a consciousness that needs to appropriate more or less deeply its own determinations, that needs to stop before one or another appearance that these determinations present to it, or that needs to advance beyond all of them. For example, the organization of the process of social metabolism under the capitalist mode of production is carried out by determining the consciousness of MDA and IK as one that needs to stop at the appearance, proper to the process of circulation, that revolutionary political will springs from the naturally free consciousness external to capital of "those from below." And it is also realized by determining my consciousness as one that needs to overcome this appearance, in order to govern its action through the knowledge that free consciousness is the form of consciousness alienated in capital, and that this alienation is what determines the revolutionary political will of the working class as the necessary bearer of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production.

At every time and place, the multiplicity of the concrete potentialities that capital contains in its movement, both historical and of its immediate reproduction, is realized in the form of the multiplicity of actions governed by individual consciousnesses. The contradictions inherent in capital, and in particular for what concerns us here, the contradictions that are immediately the bearers of its necessity to overcome itself in its own development, thus take shape in the action of the consciousnesses and wills of individuals who confront each other as if they were, above all, mutually independent. Therefore, if the knowledge of them stops at the analysis of each one of them as a concrete realized, it may seem that they lack any unitary determination apart from that which appears to spring from the individual will alone that governs them. So whoever clings to the apparent emptiness of social being proper to the abstractly free individual of bourgeois ideology, falls into the illusion that such actions are the result of the resolution of a simple individual dichotomy: "I do" or "I don't do." But it is not a question of an inorganic confluence of wills, nor of individual consciences determining the movement of the

general social relation. Behind the appearances of the lack of norm and of the autonomous will, the norm of capital accumulation is realized indirectly by determining these consciousnesses and wills as its personifications, as its necessary concrete forms of self-realization. The free consciousness and will of the people in the capitalist mode of production is the executor of the objectified social relation which, at the same time, they cannot control.

Where the concrete course of the process of capital accumulation advances in a certain direction, to put it in simple terms, either as an expression of the necessity of its overcoming or as the negation of this necessity, the consciousness and will in which the movement in question takes concrete form will appear to advance in its generalization (always through a multiplicity of different particular and individual concrete forms). And it will not do so in a merely quantitative way, but will constitute itself in the form of consciousness and will whose necessity to govern the movement of the organization of social life has become dominant. At the same time, he will find that the action that it governs has the force to impose itself on those expressed by other powers, equally present but not dominant, insofar as that action is the concrete form that at that time and place the reproduction of the process of social metabolism governed by capital takes. However, as soon as the very movement of the general social relation brings it to the point where a new phase opens up with respect to the aforementioned direction, the subjects of the previous phase will begin to discover that their wills no longer possess their former practical potency; they will find that other individuals now rise up before them—individuals who, by serving through their actions as the agents realizing the new course being taken by the movement of the general social relation, have acquired the power to ensure that the action they consciously and voluntarily govern becomes the dominant one.

In my book I present repeated concrete references to the movement of the determination of the consciousness of the working class as a political subject by the course of capital accumulation, both with respect to its general transformations (e.g., with the passage from the development of the universal worker to the differentiation in the productive attributes of the worker) and with respect to the national forms that these transformations take (e.g., the reformist character of European social democracy and the revolutionary character of the Bolshevik party and its transformation into a bureaucratic organ). I have also developed the question repeatedly regarding the specific form of capital accumulation in Argentina and how movements of that specificity are carried out by taking certain forms of consciousness that voluntarily govern political action.

The production of the dominant consciousness and will, i.e., the process of organizing the action that brings about the dominant determination of the objectified general social relation, is the process of producing a consciousness alienated in capital. As long as this consciousness is determined as the bearer of the immediate necessity of the capitalist mode of production to reproduce itself, it will stop at one or the other appearance and thus assert itself as an abstractly free consciousness which, far from recognizing itself as determined by the march of the objectified social relation, sees itself as determining this march for itself. But consciousness, capable of being the bearer of the immediate necessity of the capitalist mode of production to surpass itself in its development, cannot stop at this appearance precisely because of its own determination. It can only be the bearer of the capacity to consciously organize the process of social metabolism through the exercise by each individual of control over the social powers of his individual labor, if he knows his own determinations above all appearances. Consequently, it can only proceed from the fact that the development of its freedom has as its content the consciousness of its own alienation as the bearer of a power of the general social relation of which it is as concrete as any other. Consciousness with respect to one's own determinations is the form that the power of this action takes, overcoming the inverse appearance that consciousness itself is where this power arises from.

Each individual is the immediate subject of the production of his or her own consciousness. No one can produce consciousness in another. But each individual is the subject of the action that aims to operate in the process in which the other produces his consciousness. This action is nothing other than the way in which the other produces his consciousness as the realization of the powers of social labor, that is, as the realization of his own social being. The

way to operate positively in the process in which another produces his consciousness is to make him confront his own determinations as a social subject, advancing in this confrontation beyond the immediacy with which he did it until then. That is, it consists in knowing itself as the bearer of determinations against which its consciousness was powerless until then, so that they escaped its control. Until then, the consciousness of the other governed an action that was a concrete way of realizing a determination of the social being that needed such an unconscious realization with respect to itself. Once faced with the knowledge of its own determination, the action in question can no longer continue to be the concrete form of making the determination corresponding to the previous absence of knowledge of its cause. Whatever the result of the process of knowledge, the action in question will have been transformed into the concrete form necessary to make a determination other than the original one, or into a different concrete way of making the same original determination.

The development of consciousness consists in recognizing itself as the bearer of a determination that transcends it and that has as a necessary concrete form of performance an action governed by the knowledge of its own determinations. It is not that consciousness determines action by itself, but that action which is consciously governed by the knowledge of its determinations is the necessary form in which determination is realized.

The false dichotomy upon which MDA and IK base their argument exposes the fact that the development of their consciousness is determined by the need to cultivate the crudest form of idealist inversion. For them, it is not the case that social being determines consciousness. That is to say, it is not the case that the manner in which the process of social life is organized—namely, social being—takes concrete form within consciousness, thereby determining it. On the contrary, for MDA and IK, consciousness itself determines social being—that is, the manner in which social life is organized: if the consciousness of "those from below" does not, of its own accord and independently of the movement of capital, develop the "political will" for its "prompt organization," then "perhaps […] they may never come to know a new society." The movement of consciousness—stripped of its actual social being—is thus inverted into the very force that, in and of itself, determines the possibility or impossibility of the existence of a new social being. As I elaborate in my book, the method of logical representation—with its consequent reduction of objective knowledge to various "interpretations of the world"—leads, in and of itself, to an idealist conception.

The methodological conformism of MDA and IK is not a "misfortune" devoid of historical necessity. It is the necessary form in which their determination—as ideological producers—is realized: namely, that the working class must govern its actions by halting at the immediate appearance of being externally opposed to capital, thereby renouncing the objective knowledge of its own determinations and, in doing so, negating its own revolutionary potential.

In their ideological necessity, MDA and IK try to remove from view the crude evidence that they have no other determination for the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production than the "political will" to overturn or sustain it, going round and round after an explanation that goes beyond that "political will" that determines itself. However, the only thing they can add to it is the following statement:

> … The outcome of the class struggle, the success of the revolution, will depend on the correlation of forces and the political struggle. (MDA and IK, p. 5)

Such a forceful affirmation immediately comes up against the obvious question: And on what do the correlation of forces and the political struggle at any given moment depend? We already know that for MDA and IK the answer cannot be sought in the very movement of capital accumulation that takes concrete form in the political struggle, because that would be to fall into "economism" and its sad "passive subjects". So? All they have left is their ubiquitous "political will" from some people who oppose others.

With a view to this appearance, let us return to the true determination of the unity of the relations of force by capital:

> Capital is the economic power, which dominates everything, of bourgeois society. It must be the starting point and the point of arrival...
>
> The social character of activity, as well as the social form of the product and the participation of the individual in production, are here presented as alien and as a thing vis-à-vis individuals; not as their being mutually related, but as their being subordinated to relations which subsist independently of them and arise from the clash of mutually indifferent individuals. […] Each individual possesses social power in the form of a thing. Take this social power out of the way and it will have to be given to people over people. (Marx, *Grundrisse*, vol 1, pp. 28 and 84-5).

This wresting of social power from the thing and giving it to people over people is precisely what MDA and IK intend to do in order to empty the working class of determination through its reified social relation. Of course, they have no other place to do it than inside their own heads. And, since any recognition of such a determination is inconceivable to them, they resolve to "interpret" that I must sustain the same inversion:

> For JIC, the actors are bearers and supports of capital. The role they play in the work is determined by it. From this point of view, the worker can only revalue value, reproduce capital. Its consciousness, alienated, can only be partial as the product it produces and alienated, that is, belong to another, as the product of the labor of the worker who belongs, in capitalism, to another. Its consciousness is that of another: that of the ruling class. (MDA and IK, pp. 3-4)

Nowhere do I say such nonsense. Here there is no longer an "interpretation" of my text but a crude falsification. To do this, MDA and IK have no qualms about falling into incoherence with respect to their own arguments. Until recently, according to them, my mistake consisted in "interpreting literally" "the metaphor" of "personification", that is, in taking seriously that the consciousness of people is alienated from things, that the consciousness of people is the bearer of the social powers objectified in the product of social work. Now it turns out that, again according to them, my mistake consists in believing that the consciousness of the working class is alienated in the consciousness of the ruling class, that is, that the consciousness of some people is the bearer of social powers directly embodied as personal attributes of other individuals.

As it could not be otherwise, the incoherent falsification is intended to serve as the basis for a no less incoherent argument:

> We agree with Marx that "the ideas of the ruling class are the dominant ideas in every epoch." However, we do not believe that the struggle against capitalist oppression is a dominant (or generalized) idea and therefore we do not understand that it belongs to the ruling class. (MDA and IK, p. 4)

Since this phrase has been presented at a congress of epistemology, let us analyze it from the point of view of its form. To begin with, the qualitative complexity of the observation that "the ideas of the ruling class are the dominant ideas" is reduced in the syllogistic representation of MDA and IK to the quantitative determination of the universal "every idea of the ruling class is a dominant idea." Then, the qualitative complexity of "dominant idea" is degraded to the quantitative determination of "generalized idea". And so MDA and IK have their complete syllogism: major premise, "every idea of the ruling class is a dominant idea"; minor premise, "this idea is not dominant (or generalized)": conclusion, "this idea is not of the ruling class". Well, let's now change the idea "the struggle against capitalist oppression" to another, let's say, the idea "every member of my social class has the natural right to live off the work of others." Conclusion, since this idea is "not dominant (or generalized)," it is not an idea of the ruling class. Really? And we could also put the minor premise in a positive light, for example, with the idea "it is necessary for human life to eat every day", an idea that is undoubtedly "dominant (and generalized)", so that if MDA and IK are to be believed, it must be fought as an "idea of the ruling class". Given the power of their "reasoning," it is not surprising how pessimistic they are by reason.

MDA and IK demonstrate their ignorance of the discoveries made by Marx regarding the determination of the working class as a revolutionary subject by the reified social relation; furthermore, they introduce the falsification—and their peculiar syllogism—that stems from this ignorance in the section of their work titled “The Problem of (In)action as a Revolutionary Strategy (Nothing Gonna Change My World).” Were I to believe that the point is merely to be clever, I might well suggest that, given its content, it would be better served by the title “The Problem of (I)gnorance and (In)coherence as a Revolutionary Strategy (Comfortably Numb).” And indeed, what a problem that is.

Let us return once again to the real world, where the development of the productive forces is the determinant of the forms of social relations and, therefore, of the consciousness that governs the actions with which the social relationship is carried out:

> ... If society as it is did not contain, hidden, the material conditions of production and circulation for a classless society, all attempts to blow it up would be so many quixotic. (Marx, *Grundrisse*, vol 1, p. 87)

MDA and IK proclaim their agreement with this statement by Marx. It might be assumed, consequently, that they will ask themselves what those material conditions are concretely, in order to define the forms of political action of the working class that force their development. This definition is a condition to overcome any possibility of falling into quixotry. But no. For MDA and IK, the whole issue is once again reduced to stating the existence of different 'interpretations' whose character is defined by their willingness to be 'disposed to transformation':

> However, the proliferation of political organizations willing to transform is due to the different ways of understanding "the material conditions" and the ways of "exploding" capitalism. (MDA and IK, p. 3)

Nowhere in their article, neither when they express themselves in their own name nor when they cite third parties, do MDA and IK make the slightest reference to what "the material conditions" in question consist of. What role does the invocation of them play in your proposal? According to MDA and IK, "the proliferation of political organizations ready for transformation" is not due to the fact that each of these organizations is the bearer of a specific concrete determination of the development of the social being, and therefore of the development of the materiality of the process of social life, but "is due to the different ways of understanding..." The invocation of "material conditions" here fulfills no other role than that of including in passing an apparent reference to the materiality of the process of social life, in order to hide the gross idealist inversion of its dance of consciences and wills that determine the social being by themselves. Can MDA and IK explain the concrete relationship that exists between the concrete development of the material conditions of social labour as the basis for the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production and the concrete forms of political action of the working class, without appealing to the dialectic of on the one hand and on the other hand?

Clearly not. The necessity personified by MDA and IK to empty the consciousness of the working class of its determination as a way of governing the materiality of the process of social life is crudely exposed in the following statement:

> We understand that consciousness about the production process is the way in which the working class prepares itself for the possibility of the social organization of labor, but we do not find the strict necessity for this consciousness of the process to overcome it. In fact, we understand that the very overcoming in practice of the forms of production of capital would also transform the ways of understanding the process, since a new one would be in front of us! (MDA and IK, p. 6)

The "understanding" of MDA and IK has the striking power for an idea, to transform the practical action of the consciousness of the working class applied to the current organization of

social work into a mere "preparation" in case tomorrow there is the "possibility" of another organization of social work (a possibility that, as we have already been informed, it is not the form taken by the development of the material productive forces of social labour, but springs from an inspired spirit carrying out the opportune "revolutionary reading" of material conditions). Such a reduction in the active role of working class consciousness in the current organization of production can only occur to someone so enclosed within the narrowness of the academic world that he confuses the practice of the social process of production with a speech at the inauguration of the school year.

Not in vain, like an unconfessed Lutheran, the understanding of MDA and IK is scandalized by reason. Hegel (with idealist inversion and all) already clearly distinguished between understanding and reason. The understanding separates and keeps opposites motionless, turning them into abstractions. Reason discovers the movement of opposites in the development of their concrete contradictory unity. Therefore, the only dialectic that the understanding of MDA and IK knows is that of "on the one hand" and "on the other hand".

For MDA and IK it is not that "consciousness of the production process" is the properly human way of organizing that process. For them, in the capitalist mode of production, on the one hand the material forms of the production process take place, on the other hand the consciousness of the active subjects of this process has no other intervention in it than to "prepare" for a possible future whose advent does not depend in any way on the development of the materiality of production.

But the "understanding" of MDA and IK can go even further, notably not because of what it finds, but because of what it "doesn't find." The development of the general conscious organization of the process of social production is the practical overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. But MDA and IK "do not find the strict necessity" that the subject who develops the general conscious organization of the process of social production has to develop "the consciousness of the process [of capitalist social production] in order to overcome it." That is, for MDA and IK the general, that is, full, conscious organization of the process of social production could be carried out by a subject lacking full consciousness with respect to the organization of the process of social production which he transforms into that conscious organization. In other words, the exercise of full consciousness, which constitutes the conscious organization of the process of social production, would not require the full exercise of that same consciousness. And why wouldn't that awareness be required? For, once the full conscious organization of the process of social production has been engendered without the consciousness of the subject who has engendered it having known where it started from and therefore where it has arrived (and consequently it is still not capable of engendering what it has already generated), only then would it find that this full conscious organization already exists and that, now the time has come for him to develop the full consciousness capable of consciously organizing the process of social production. Of the dialectic of on the one hand and on the other hand there remains nothing but incoherence. And behind the rudeness of the incoherence, the necessity for it is revealed: in the fulfilment of their ideological role, it is not enough for MDA and IK to doubt that the full knowledge by the working class of its own determinations is the necessary way in which it organises its action to overcome the capitalist mode of production. What they are trying to do is to oppose this rationality with the open apologetics of the crudest irrationality, in such a way as to empty the development of the consciousness of the working class from the specific historical powers that are its own. All under the appearance of acting in the production of a workers' consciousness critical of the capitalist mode of production.

The question presents itself in a very different way when it is recognized that the social being of the working class determines its revolutionary action as the most powerful, and ultimately absolute, concrete form of the development of the material conditions that constitutes the determining basis for the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. The first thing that is thus recognized is that the organization of the revolutionary action of the working class necessarily has as its form the knowledge of this development. Or, in other words, knowing what the transformation into the materiality of the material conditions of production consists of, which engenders the necessity for the conscious organization of the process of social life, is the

necessary starting point in the process of organizing the action of the working class capable of overcoming the capitalist mode of production. This is what separates scientific socialism from ideological constructs, starting with those that stop at the apparent dichotomy of a "voluntarism" devoid of determination and a "determinism" devoid of form.

That is why I start in my book by unfolding the development of the transformation in the materiality of human labor that determines the historical specificity of the capitalist mode of production. And I accompany this development until it reaches its necessary concrete form of realization in the form of the revolutionary action of the working class. I transcribe below the corresponding part of a synthesis of this deployment, which has been taken as the foundation of the CICP as a collective of workers' political action:

> The transformation of the nature of labour and of the commodity producer highlights the historical reason for the existence of the capitalist mode of production: the transformation of the productive powers of individual free labour into productive powers of collective labour consciously organised by the same collective worker who performs it, under the contradictory form of the development of social labour as private labour. It is a question of a labor whose product confronts its own producers as the autonomous bearer of the capacity to set in motion the labor of society and, therefore, as the bearer of a social power that is alien to them and dominates them. It is this contradiction immanent in the capitalist mode of production that makes it carry within itself the necessity of surpassing itself, engendering in its own development the general conscious organization of social production.
>
> …
>
> The advance in the socialization of private labor necessarily involves the centralization of capital, that is, the confluence of individual capitals towards their immediate unity as the total capital of society. It is in political action, that is, when it immediately expresses the powers of social capital, that the working class gives shape to the direct socialization of private labor. The revolutionary action of the working class is the necessary concrete form in which the aforementioned constant revolution in the materiality of the work processes – which at the same time implies their direct socialization – develops its necessity to organize itself as a directly social power that transcends the limits of its private capitalist form. Therefore, this revolutionary action is the necessary concrete way in which the capitalist mode of production realizes its historical necessity to surpass itself in its own development.
>
> …
>
> The private character of labour means simply that the free consciousness which organises each unit of social labour is deprived of controlling its own social powers. These are presented to him as inverted as the social power that imposes on him its product – capital – to embody the general unity of social labor. In so far as free consciousness necessarily personifies this social power which belongs to its product, it is determined as alienated consciousness.
>
> In the fullness of its development, the free consciousness that carries alienation takes direct form in the very materiality of the labor process. At this point, the work consists materially in applying a scientific consciousness—that is, one that knows its own determinations objectively and, as such, advances in its freedom—to the development of control over natural forces in order to objectify them in machinery, that is, to the multiplication of the capacity to organize the process of social metabolism. But this same product, i.e., this multiplied capacity for organization, confronts its producers under the specific social form of surplus value. That is, they are confronted as a social power that is alien to them because it belongs to the material product of their labor and to which their own objective consciousness is subjected. It is an automatic organization of social life, where human work consists in developing the capacity to control this organization consciously, which at the same time has as its immediate objective the multiplication of the capacity to automatically organize social life behind the backs of the consciousness of its producers.
>
> The absolute limit to the capitalist development of the productive forces of society lies in this denial of full dominion over the powers of social labour themselves. Therefore, the ultimate capitalist barrier to the development of the productive forces lies in the mutilation imposed on free consciousness by its determination as a form of existence of alienated consciousness. The overcoming of this barrier necessarily implies the annihilation of private labor as a mode of organizing social labor, giving rise to the general conscious organization of this labor.
>
> This step forward in the development of the productive forces then necessarily takes on a

> concrete material form that is specific to it. Namely, it takes the form of a social revolution in which the material subject of this development, i.e., the working class, no longer confines itself to annihilating the bourgeoisie by transforming capital into an immediately social property. What it does is annihilate capitalism itself. And, with it, it annihilates the general political representative of social capital, the state. Thus the working class also attains its own end. The new general social relation has as its concrete form the consciousness and will by which the worker immediately determines himself as an individual organ of social labour. The fullness of freedom is no longer limited simply to the absence of the subjection of the individual to the personal domination of another. It has developed as the full objective consciousness with respect to one's own individuality as the bearer of the social productive powers. It is, therefore, a question of the general conscious organization of the process of production of social life. Free consciousness, that is, free individuality, has become the general social relation. (*Science as political action of the working class. Bases of the Center for Research as Practical Criticism*)

To repeat it by way of closing, the active subject of the annihilation of the capitalist mode of production through the development of the conscious organization of labor as a directly social power is necessarily determined by its social being as one that knows the transformation in the materiality of labor that is historically specific to that mode of production. in order to govern its revolutionary action as the most powerful necessary concrete form that carries out this transformation. Such is the material determination of the working class as a revolutionary subject. My action as an individual organ of this social subject has the concrete form of acting in the process in which other members of the working class produce their consciousness by determining themselves as bearers of this potentiality.

MDA and IK oppose this revolutionary subject with one that responds to the bourgeois appearance of the individual whose freedom does not consist in knowing that he is determined by his social being, but in believing himself to be naturally empty of such determination, so that his abstract "free will" appears to him to be restricted by the existence of a social relation that is imposed on him from the outside and which he confronts by his very nature as a "free" subject. MDA and IK thus demonstrate that, however much they believe themselves to be free from the determination of their social being as personifications of capital, this social being of theirs determines them as bearers of the necessity to ideologically deny the material determination of the working class as a revolutionary subject by capital itself. They do this by putting in the place of this determination the passive acceptance of the appearance that the revolutionary powers of the working class must spring from a will which, "free" from being socially determined by its own general social relation, must arise from outside it. Thus, they act in the process in which the working class produces its consciousness by fulfilling the opposite role to the one they claim to fulfill.

Throughout this paper I have raised a number of questions regarding the necessity of the MDA and IK conceptions, and I have given my answer to those questions. Since MDA and IK have put forward their text in order to open the debate, I hope that they will now present their responses to them, none of which are rhetorical in nature. Therefore, I hope that my questions do not provoke in them that expressive attack of passivity that those who hold similar points of view to theirs seem to experience, as soon as I ask them. From this passivity then spring the well-known answers of the "yes, we should think about it" that never show going beyond the "would have", the "when I have time" of a "when" that never comes, of the uncritical repetition that the "revolutionary will" is self-founded, or of the stupid vainglory of Holloway's own ignorance of which "we no longer know what 'revolution' means; when we are asked we tend to cough and sputter and try to change the subject; […] not-knowing is part of the revolutionary process." Far from showing their authors as active subjects of the process of overcoming the capitalist mode of production through the action of the working class necessarily governed by the consciousness of its own determinations that transcends all appearance, these responses show them as bearers of the necessity of capital to reproduce itself through the reproduction of a consciousness of the working class powerless to know its own alienation and, consequently, their own specific historical powers.